



The Washington
Teachers' Union

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Joint Statement by Washington Teachers' Union President George Parker, DC Public Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten on Tentative Agreement Between WTU and DCPS

WASHINGTON—Negotiators for the Washington Teachers' Union (WTU) and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) have reached a tentative contract agreement that will help improve teaching and learning in D.C.'s public schools. The tentative agreement, reached after a long and well-documented collective bargaining process, will provide every child in our city with the best education possible.

While getting to this point took time, one thing is clear: The union and the school district want our city's schools to be the best they can be. We worked through our differences to come up with a plan for education that best serves the needs of D.C.'s schoolchildren. We never veered from the principle that we must raise academic and teaching standards while also treating teachers fairly and giving them the tools and conditions they need to be effective in the classroom.

Our combined efforts at the bargaining table have produced an agreement that reflects the importance and value of great teachers in raising the academic achievement of students. Teachers in classrooms throughout D.C.'s public schools demonstrate their commitment to the children of this city every day, and the agreement reflects this reality. At the same time, the agreement offers a system of checks and balances that will ensure greater accountability from teachers and administrators. Overall, the agreement will empower teachers to excel in the classroom, and will provide a foundation for continued progress and gains in student achievement.

The agreement includes many opportunities for the WTU and DCPS to collaborate on several fronts—to improve low-performing schools, increase the number of high-quality

schools, provide meaningful professional development for teachers and other educators, and improve school discipline and safety policies and procedures.

The WTU and DCPS have negotiated a compensation plan that will enhance the District's efforts to recruit and retain the best teachers in our schools, including opportunities for additional compensation that provide schoolwide and individual bonuses. We also have agreed on a fair and objective due process system.

Monumental as achieving this agreement is, it's just a start. The next step is to explain the agreement to the teachers and recommend its ratification. We pledge to work collaboratively, once it has been ratified, to implement the agreement and transform our school system.

A special thanks goes to Howard University School of Law Dean Kurt Schmoke for his incomparable leadership, vision and guidance in helping us reach this agreement.

Our goal during this process has been to arrive at a contract that is good for kids and fair to teachers. We believe that this tentative agreement exceeds that standard, and has the potential to dramatically turn around education in Washington, D.C. Above all, the agreement is a reflection of our shared commitment to the children of the District of Columbia.

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